

# Ghana FELTP

## Background

The Ghana Field Epidemiology and Laboratory Training Program (GFELTP) was started in 2007 to help strengthen disease surveillance of the country's public health programs. This hands-on program trains public health leaders while providing epidemiologic services to the Ghana Health Service, which serves as the institutional home of GFELTP.

The program places emphasis on service, providing real results to the Ghana health authorities as residents pursue a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in Applied Epidemiology and Disease Control Program through the School of Public Health, College of Health Sciences, University of Ghana.



## Program Structure

The GFELTP MPhil is a 2-year in-service post-graduate training program in applied epidemiology and public health laboratory management.

The program combines didactic lectures and field placement activities for physicians, veterinarians, and laboratory scientists. Residents spend 25% of their time in classroom instruction and 75% in field assignments. A resident advisor provides guidance and supervision to the residents while they undergo the training.

## Objectives

The GFELTP aims to improve the health of the people in Ghana by addressing Ghana's public health needs and priorities through training and service in applied epidemiology and public health laboratory practice. The program's objectives are to

- Strengthen public health systems by improving laboratory participation and providing evidence for decision makers
- Provide epidemiological services to the public health system at national and sub-national levels
- Improve national capacity to respond to public health emergencies such as disease outbreaks, natural disasters, and other unusual public health events
- Strengthen national surveillance systems through a team approach linking physicians, laboratorians, and veterinarians
- Improve communications and networking of public health practitioners and researchers in the country and throughout the region

## Funding and Partnerships

The program is a collaboration between these entities:

- Ghana Ministry of Health
- University of Ghana, School of Public Health
- U.S. Agency for International Development
- UN Foundation
- African Field Epidemiology Network

## Residents Accomplishments

Residents perform crucial services to support the mission of the Ghana Health Service. For example, in 2009, residents investigated a major rabies outbreak in the upper East region of Ghana. There were 11 cases with 9 fatalities. Residents were also involved in the National Technical Coordination Committee launch of the National H1N1 awareness/prevention campaign and the investigation of an H1N1 outbreak among students and staff at an international school in Accra. There were 37 confirmed H1N1 cases, 258 suspected cases and no confirmed H1N1 deaths in Ghana.

In addition, residents evaluated and made recommendations for improvement of the surveillance systems for HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, yellow fever, and Buruli ulcer. Residents also conducted secondary data analysis for disease control programs with recommendations leading to public health action for a rabies management information system, an HIV lab tests and sero-prevalence at the national public health reference laboratory, an AFB surveillance and wild polio isolation, and for urine microscopy and antibiotics sensitivity pattern.



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